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ABSTRACT

Theme study is in-depth research on a topic, issue, person, or content-area idea, in which reading and writing are used as tools for learning. Educational benefits of theme study include motivation, individualization, explorations of relationships, and the encouragement of a lifelong-learning attitude. Based on the premise that theme study is more student-oriented than the conventional theme unit and provides children with purposes for high-level learning, this guide provides a rationale and curriculum design for theme study in the elementary classroom. The first part of the guide presents ways to think critically about the study, create a suitable classroom environment, inspire curiosity, and generate a brainstorming session. The second part offers ways to encourage students to think as researchers, writers, and presenters. The third part provides assessment and evaluation techniques and class management techniques needed to drive this new curriculum. Observations on teacher research during theme study are included. Appendices provide a theme study resource inventory, sign-up sheet for theme centers, oral report evaluation form, final-draft writing evaluation form, daily schedules, and a parent report form. (AP)

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